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ABSTRACT

The concentration of disadvantaged people in the major cities of the United States requires new programs of the urban library. Libraries must actively intervene to provide information and referral services on the problems of daily living and should serve as cultural institutions, reflecting the various ethnic orientations to be found in the city. Important ingredients to a successful urban outreach program include a sympathetic staff and small, neighborhood library centers. The greatest difficulty in carrying out any specialized program for the disadvantaged is the matter of funding, for the very concentration of poverty and related problems reduces the city's fiscal and personal resources for meeting these needs. In addition, urban libraries, because of their large collections, are called on to serve as research libraries and area resource centers for the suburbs. Statistics show that library expenses are rising, but that urban libraries are receiving a decreasing share of the city budget. Additional funds are imperative for the development of library programs deemed necessary for urban living. (Author/SL)

A STUDY OF
URBAN LIBRARY NEEDS

by

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I. The Changing Environment of the Urban Library

Cities of over 100,000 population are the home of 27.7 percent of the U.S. population on .37 percent of the land.[1] The character of nearly all these major cities has been changed by recent shifts in population. They are increasingly beset by poverty, inadequate schools, slums, crime in the streets, pollution, insufficient transportation systems, and inadequate services.

Urban areas have been undergoing a spatial dispersion of population made possible by the automobile, super expressways, and relative prosperity. The middle class found they could afford to live out of the city and pay the cost of transportation. The resulting vacuum was filled by increasing numbers of poor and disadvantaged. These new immigrants became in turn a push factor in the middle class flight outward.

The new residents of the city were in part immigrant groups who were unprepared for life in the United States and who settled with groups of their countrymen already in urban areas. More importantly, they were large numbers of poor already in the U.S. being forced from farms and migrant worker camps to the city. These unskilled and often semi-literate laborers, mostly Negro, Puerto Rican, and Mexican, became the poverty- and unemployment-plagued residents of urban ghettos.

As a rough approximation, it appears that at least one-sixth of the urban population, or over five million families, live in a slum environment.[2] Of the 22.7 million blacks in the United States, 74 percent live in metropolitan areas and 78 percent of that number live in central cities.[3] In 1970, more than 80 percent of the ten million Spanish-speaking population lived in an urban environment.[4] During the 1950-60 decade,

the white population of the central city increased by 5.7 percent while the non-white population increased 50.6 percent. During the 1960-70 decade the white population of the central city decreased by .2 percent and the non-white population increased 32.1 percent.[5] These bare statistics can convey very little of the human problems represented by the vast movements in population and drifting of millions of people into crowded and poverty-plagued ghettos.

The needs of this new urban population call for new or greatly expanded services: more and different types of police and fire protection, health and welfare service, massive urban renewal programs, anti-poverty projects, expanded recreational facilities, and improved city public schools. While the central city poor place heavier demands than previous residents upon public agencies, at the same time they are much less able to contribute to the cost of the services they require. There is still a heavy reliance on the property tax as a major source of city income, but the growth of taxable assessed valuation has virtually stopped or even declined. Several factors prohibit growth in local income: the departure of the middle class with the financial means of upgrading residential property, state laws limiting the taxing and borrowing powers of cities, elimination of taxable property due to highway construction and urban renewal programs, growth of public housing, purchase of city property by non-profit organizations, and the obsolescence of many buildings and houses.[6]

In comparison, the fringe areas have been growing at a rate four times that of the central city and are drawing on an expanding tax base.[7] The residents of outlying areas have found legal and tax advantages in forming incorporated suburbs

with local control of schools and high quality services that formerly existed in the central city. Seldom does an incorporated suburb merge with the city. For every successful annexation of territory by the city several attempts fail.[8]

The dispersion of the middle class population has been paralleled by that of commerce and industry. Lower tax rates outside the city and the availability of a large working force and more affluent market have encouraged the development of large suburban shopping centers and industrial parks. The suburbs of New York now send less than half of their workers to jobs in the city, and these suburbs now contain about 50 percent of the area's manufacturing jobs, retail jobs, and restaurants.[9] This has meant the loss of one of the most viable sources of income for city government. It has also cut off large numbers of ghetto-dwellers from employment opportunities. The relocated industries chose sites convenient for automobile transportation rather than rail or bus transportation, which are more within the economic reach of those with low incomes. In addition, many mass transit systems simply do not serve the new suburban plants where new jobs are available.[10] This is only one of many factors frustrating the search of central city's poor for a better existence.

The concentration in the city of people plagued with poverty, inferior education, disrupted families, disease and malnutrition, unemployment or underemployment becomes in turn one of the concerns of urban libraries. The library's responsibility to reach out to the poor and the disadvantaged is the subject of Chapter II. A picture of present user groups is sketched in Chapter III, followed by Chapter IV's emphasis on the importance of the urban library as area resource center. Library statistics are contained in Chapter V with the view that local library financing can no longer meet the demands placed on urban libraries.

II. Serving the New City-dweller, the Disadvantaged

Who are the urban disadvantaged? In contrast to other areas, the population of the center city is generally characterized by lower income level, lower educational level, larger percentage of minority groups and aged, and more socially and culturally underprivileged.[11] It is obvious that the future of urban public libraries is inextricably interwoven with these groups who are forming an increasingly large sector of the cities. Libraries can no longer afford to have a policy of business as usual plus a fringe of outreach service to the disadvantaged.

Although whole books have been written on the subject of library service to the disadvantaged, it is important to emphasize here some of the problems facing urban libraries in serving their inner city residents.

The public library has been a middle-class institution. Library collections, services, and regulations have been geared to the educated and articulate. The upper strata are aware of the benefits and satisfactions they can obtain from books and information, and they are aware of the library as a source. Libraries have responded to this demand and can provide a highly sophisticated book service.

The non-using disadvantaged have never appeared at the library door to present themselves as a problem. Poor, half-educated Blacks, Mexican-Americans, or whites have a far more desperate need than the middle class for the kinds of information available. But, they are not aware of the need for information, or how and where to get the materials to help themselves. The kinds of information critical for everyday living have been identified as: information on consumer goods and services (including food, apparel, comparative quality,

labelling, credit availability), housing and transportation, educational opportunities available for training and retraining, medical information so access to doctors and clinics is made easier and so the symptoms of diseases are recognizable.[12] While access to such information might help to change some of the less favorable aspects of inner city existence, the ghetto-dweller is not print or information oriented as is the middle class. Active intervention of the urban library is necessary.

Three strategic information functions for the public library have been suggested: reducing barriers of access to already-existing information, collecting the much-needed information which does not now exist, and effecting the widespread dissemination of crucial information which is not now being distributed so that ghetto people and the groups working with them can be reached.[13] In this last regard libraries should coordinate the proliferation of information from various city agencies about programs, benefits, employment, and training opportunities. Libraries should also serve an important referral function of directing inquirers to the agencies in the city which deal with their problems. A reference service of a highly personalized and specialized form would help to solve the problem. Someone considering moving into a low-income housing program wants some realistic advice on what he is actually getting himself into. People wanting to get on welfare do not want the welfare system explained; they want to know where to go and to whom to talk to get on welfare. People in a tenement trying to force a landlord to make improvements may need help in finding out who he is and how to force him to make changes, not the law (which is on his side anyway).[14]

There is also a need for the urban library to function as

a cultural institution, but with materials representing differing cultural orientations than has been traditional in the past. Unlike previous immigrants to American cities, today's ethnic groupings have not melted into a larger society, but prefer to emphasize their own differing outlook and cultural heritage. Neighborhood library centers in black areas have been able to provide a variety of black materials for their communities. Providing cultural material for the Spanish-speaking community involves more problems since materials in Spanish are not as readily available, and Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban groups each have their own history, customs, and attitudes. In addition to books, where money has been available, urban libraries have experimented with the use of non-print materials--records, cassettes, films. Although this approach may seem an unnecessary luxury, it should be remembered that the disadvantaged are characterized by low educational levels and the resulting low literacy levels. In the inner city are people who may not read well or may not read at all. If they read, it may not be English. A study commissioned by the National Reading Council has indicated that nearly 30 million out-of-school Americans have serious reading difficulties.[15] To reach this group, urban libraries must be able to reach out with more than books.

Even with a well-organized information system and a variety of cultural materials, the single most important ingredient in a successful outreach program is staff. One barrier which often separates librarians from inner city residents is the profession's largely white and middle-class composition. The slum individual's habits and values may seem shiftless, delinquent, or unmotivated from a middle-class point of view, while in actuality they may be a perfectly realistic response to the physical, economic, and

cultural conditions of slum life. A white librarian finds it difficult to respond with sensitivity to a community of which he has never been and will never be a part. In turn, slum residents are likely to respond with distrust or hostility toward attempts by an outsider to offer help, especially in an institutional form. There is the additional problem of communicating with these people in their own language which is most often not standard English or standard Spanish but the vernacular of the slums.

Fortunately, there is an increasing push toward recruitment of minority group members into librarianship. Ghetto residents themselves have proved of great benefit to libraries in the critical area of sympathetic personnel. Several urban libraries have employed community residents as library aides. These aides are valuable as liaison agents between the library and the neighborhood. Some function as library extension workers and do not remain in the building but work in the neighborhood to deal with people on a personal and direct basis.[16] Libraries are realizing the need for effective two-way communications between the library and inner city residents. This means alerting the residents to the availability of services and materials, and alerting the library concerning what materials, information, and services are most relevant to and needed by this segment of the inner city population.

Another key factor in urban library work with the disadvantaged is the desirability of small neighborhood library centers. These can offer the person-to-person approach for uncertain ghetto residents and can specialize in the needs and wishes of the neighborhood. Large cities are really comprised of smaller cities, each with its own structures and character-

istics. In the words of one urban librarian:

> "One of the first things I learned when I went to Brooklyn was that there is no such place. Brooklyn is a collection of very discrete neighborhoods, each with very different population, economic, social, and racial characteristics, and very different reactions to, and needs for, education and libraries."[17]

Only decentralized libraries can recognize and accommodate radical differences between specific neighborhoods. In addition, accessibility is of prime importance in library use. Neighborhood centers can be located where people will pass them in the normal pursuit of thier activities, and it is essential that they be well located. "If you do not place library services where people trip over them, they will not be used," is one expression emphasizing the importance of location.[18]

Library service for the aged is often mentioned in the context of library service for the disadvantaged. In 1970 over 19 million people in the United States were 65 years or older and that number is increasing by over 1,000 a day.[19] It is true that the group called "the aged" includes people of all races and various income and educational levels. However, in the words of Ollie Randall, founder of the National Council on the Aging:

> ". . . at the same time we should recognize that the senior citizens are people with some special social, psychological, economic, and biological needs resulting from the process of aging, and that libraries have a responsibility and a concern for helping to meet these needs."[20]

There is a need for information on social and medical services by the aged. The shut-in has a need for companionship and materials with which to spend his time. For the urban library the shut-in is often difficult to find and the individual service he requires is expensive in staff time. In addition to such special services as shut-in service, bookmobile projects,

special programs and clubs, and drop-in centers, urban libraries have recognized the need for such special materials as large print books, talking books, and tapes in their service to the elderly.

The greatest problem in carrying out any specialized program for disadvantaged groups is the matter of funding. The majority of programs for the disadvantaged have been financed by federal funds, but the lack of stability in the receipt of these funds has interfered with the effectiveness of the programs. Urban libraries have been left with the task of serving undue proportions of those hardest to serve--the poor, the ill-educated, the ghetto-dweller. The very concentration of these problems in the city reduces the city's fiscal and personal resources for meeting them. Whether the city taxes persons, properties, businesses or combinations, its services will be critically handicapped if taxes stop at the city line.[21] There is a need for a redesign of federal funding for urban libraries that will not just support innovative projects but will support sound ongoing services.

III. The Present User of Urban Libraries

In order to understand present clientele and to sense potential user groups, several urban libraries have conducted user studies. These have taken various forms depending upon the particular interests of the library involved. Some libraries have surveyed only their central library patrons, others both the patrons of the central library and the branches. Several libraries within one metropolitan area have been surveyed as a group or several libraries within one state have been studied to give a state view.

In these studies different variables have been used to describe the users: different age groupings, educational groupings and occupational groupings. Some have attempted to survey only 'adult' users, using such definitions for adult as over 12 or over 16 or out of school adults. Although some libraries have analyzed circulation records and user registration cards as a part of their study, the usual method has been an at-the-library questionnaire or mail questionnaire. Learning the characteristics of users has been most important in cases where libraries then compare users to the total population of their service area. In addition to user characteristics most surveys have branched into such areas as user satisfaction with library services, reason for the visit, type of material used, whether assistance is sought, and other related topics.

Despite the diversity indicated above it is possible to make some generalizations from these studies about the types of people now using urban libraries. While it is possible to sketch a composite picture of metropolitan library users from these studies, the diverse nature of the results indicates

that individual libraries must survey their own users to determine their unique nature.

User studies were collected by using Library Literature (1960 - 1972) under the heading "Use studies - public libraries" and the publication, Bibliography of Use Surveys of Public and Academic Libraries, 1950 - Nov. 1970 by Pauline Atkin. Tables I - III reproduce the categories and groupings as they appear in the individual studies. Tables are identified by city or area, with the full citation for each study appearing in the bibliography following this chapter. The bibliography is annotated to explain briefly the method by which each study was conducted. Not every survey had usable data in each category considered.

The age of users is considered in Table I. Because of the different groupings used in the surveys it is impossible to make exact comparisons. However, in most cases the percentage of use drops off after about 40 years of age and is about 5% or lower by the age 60. Since several of the studies surveyed only central library use, it is not surprising to find this low percentage for the oldest age group, who may find the main library inaccessible. Branch use only by the 60 years plus group was 11.1% in the San Francisco Study. Percentages of main library use of 1.2% and 3.3% for the youngest age groups (under 12 and under 14) are explainable in part by the same inaccessibility which deters the elderly from using the central library. Cleveland's 51.8% branch use only, and Chicago's 38.7%, based on both main and branch library use, show a heavy use by children 14 years and under.

Generally, the heaviest percentages of use fall in the middle years, from the young adult age group to the 40 years

TABLE I

AGE COMPOSITION OF LIBRARY USERS

BASED ON DATA FROM METROPOLITAN LIBRARY USER SURVEYS

City or Area	Age Groups	Percentage of Total Lib. Users	
Chicago (including residents only, use measured at both main library and branches)	14 and under	38.7	
	15-19	22.9	
	20-39	23.8	
	40-59	10.5	
	60 and over	4.1	
Cleveland Metropolitan Area (Branches only)	0-14	51.8	
	15-19	24.5	
	20-24	3.1	
	25-64	19.9	
	65 and over	0.8	
Detroit (Residents only, measured at main library only)	Under 14	3.3	
	14-19	36.7	
	20-29	40.5	
	30-39	7.8	
	40-49	5.7	
	50-59	3.5	
	60 and over	2.4	
Five Pennsylvania Cities (only those 16 years or older surveyed)	16-21	26	
	22-29	19	
	30-39	18	
	40-49	21	
	50-59	11	
	60 and over	5	
Metropolitan Maryland (Only those 12 years or older surveyed)	12-16	22.4	
	17-21	24.9	
	22-34	18.1	
	35-50	25.0	
	Over 50	8.3	
		Main Lib.	/Branches
San Francisco (Both main library and branch use)	12 and under	1.2	10.5
	13-18	11.6	20.1
	19-25	32.5	14.4
	26-40	32.0	22.8
	41-60	16.9	21.0
	60 and over	5.7	11.1

group. Usually the groups showing library use from the age of about 14 or 16 to about 20 or 21 have the highest percentage. This is reflected in the high percentage of student use shown in Table II. Each city's survey shows its own pattern of use in the middle age groupings, and further generalizations would not be well-founded.

Table II presents the occupations of library users. Where occupational groupings in individual studies were very detailed, groups were combined to fascilitate comparisons with other studies. In all cases, student use is higher than use by any other group, varying from 32.4% to 64.2% of total library use. In half of the cases, student use is higher than use by all employed adults, when all occupations are combined. Even the New York Public Library Research Libraries, who do not generally permit use by high school students, report 35.6% student use.

Library use by the retired shows the same low percentage as use by the oldest age group in Table I, never more than 5% of main library use but higher use of branch libraries. Housewives never show more than 4% use of central urban libraries, but may account for as much as 18% of total use of branch libraries. Both of these cases underline the need for readily accessible libraries. These groups do not or can not go to the central city to use a library.

Considering only employed adults, the professional, managerial category represents the largest user group in each survey. The professional, managerial group represents from 17% - 27% of all library use, while the sales, clerical group represents 5.3% - 8% of all library use. Those in the craftsman, laborer category represent the smallest group of employed users, 3.5% - 5%.

TABLE II

OCCUPATION OF LIBRARY USERS

BASED ON DATA FROM METROPOLITAN LIBRARY USER SURVEYS

City or Area	Occupation	Percentage of Total Lib. Users
Detroit (Resident and non-resident users, main library only)	Professional, managerial	17.1
	Sales, clerical	6.8
	Craftsman, laborer	4.2
	Housewife	3.3
	Student	64.2
	Retired	1.3
	Unemployed	.4
Metropolitan Maryland	Professional, managerial	17.2
	Sales, clerical	5.3
	Craftsman, laborer	3.5
	Housewife	16.4
	Student	47.3
	Retired	2.8
	No response	8.1
N.Y. Central Libs. (those designated as main resource library within their system)	Paid Occupation Only	
	Professional	24
	Sales, clerical	8
	Services	5
	Craftsman, laborer	5
	Part time, volunteer	21
	No response	37
	Other Activities	
	Housewife	23
	Student	37
	Retired	4
	Other	7
	No response	29
N.Y. Public Library (General users of Research Libraries only)	Self-employed professional	10.4
	Professor, schoolteacher	12.3
	Employed by non-profit organization	4.5
	Employed by private firm	23.7
	Housewife	1.4
	Student	35.6
	Retired or unemployed	5.5
	Other	3.8

TABLE II (cont.)

City or Area	Occupation	Percentage of Total Lib. Users	
		Main Lib./Branches	
San Francisco	Professional, managerial	27.1	18.2
	Sales, clerical	13.3	8.9
	Craftsman, laborer	8.3	4.1
	Housewife	3.8	17.8
	Student	32.4	37.8
	Retired	5.0	9.2
	Unemployed	6.4	2.3

Related to this pattern of occupational use is the pattern of use by educational level shown in Table III. Each survey shows consistently that the higher the level of education, the heavier the use of the library. Only 2.4% to 8.3% of library users did not have some high school education. From 22% to 28% of library users graduated from high school. Education above the high school level is reported by 57% to 74% of the users, with 22% to 64.9% of users being college graduates or holders of advanced degrees. Because of the unique situation of the New York Public Library Research Libraries, their figures should not be compared directly with other libraries, but 67.9% of the general users had bachelor's degrees or higher.

For comparison, Table IV shows the median level of educational achievement of adults and the percentage of non-white population in a sample of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants.[22] The table shows an inverse relationship between the percentage of non-white population, the increase in percentage of non-white population and the median adult educational level in the city. Those cities which have a large non-white population and which experienced a rapid increase in the non-white population have the lowest median adult educational levels. The median schooling is generally less than 12 years for urban adults and this group represents only 2.4% to 20.5% of total library use.

From this view of urban library user as student or well-educated, well-employed adult, it seems urban libraries are doing little to reach the growing numbers outside of these groups in their cities. Certainly the categories which might contain disadvantaged adults appear among those with the lowest library use. Whether general student use contains a large proportion of disadvantaged youth is highly questionable. In

TABLE III

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF LIBRARY USERS

BASED ON DATA FROM METROPOLITAN LIBRARY USER SURVEYS

City or Area	Education	Percentage of Total Lib. Users	
Detroit (Residents only)	Years Completed		
	0-8	4.8	
	9-11	15.7	
	12	22.4	
	13-15	34.7	
	16 plus	22.3	
Metropolitan Maryland	Last School Attended		
	Elementary	8.3	
	High School	28.1	
	College	60.5	
New York Central Libraries (Non-students only)	Years Completed		
	8 or less	2.7	
	9-11	5.3	
	12	27.7	
	13-15	24.6	
	16 plus	39.7	
New York Public Library (Research Libraries)	Highest Degree		
	Doctorate	6.6	
	Masters	17.9	
	Professional	6.8	
	Bachelors	36.3	
	Community College	4.8	
	None of the above	27.7	
San Francisco (Nonstudents only)	Highest School Completed	Main Lib.	/Branches
	Elementary	.8	.1
	Junior High	1.6	1.3
	High School	22.2	22.4
	Business/Technical	9.0	11.2
	College	41.3	39.4
	Graduate/Professional	23.6	21.0

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TABLE IV*

COMPARISON OF THE NON-WHITE POPULATION AND THE MEDIAN ADULT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF A SAMPLE OF CITIES WITH THE MEDIAN ADULT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ALL CENTRAL CITIES AND THE SUBURBAN AREAS OF THE STATE

City	Percent of Non-whites in Total Population		Median Adult Educational Level for Central City		Median Level for all Central Cities of the State		Median Level for Suburban Areas of the State	
	1960	1970	M	F	M	F	M	F
Atlanta, Georgia	38.3%	51.3%	11.6	11.5	11.5	11.3	12.5	12.2
Baltimore, Maryland	34.7	46.4	9.9	10.2	9.9	10.2	12.6	12.4
Boston, Massachusetts	9.1	16.3	12.1	12.1	11.6	11.8	12.4	12.4
Chicago, Illinois	22.9	32.7	11.3	11.1	11.6	11.4	12.4	12.3
Cleveland, Ohio	28.6	38.3	10.6	10.7	11.5	11.6	12.4	12.3
Dayton, Ohio	21.8	30.5	11.2	11.2	11.5	11.6	12.4	12.3
Denver, Colorado	6.1	9.3	12.4	12.3	12.4	12.3	12.7	12.5
Detroit, Michigan	28.9	43.7	10.8	11.2	11.3	11.7	12.3	12.2
Fort Lauderdale, Florida	23.3	14.6	12.3	12.3	12.1	12.0	12.2	12.2
Hartford, Connecticut	15.3	29.9	10.4	10.8	11.3	11.6	12.4	12.3
Houston, Texas	22.9	25.7	12.1	12.0	12.1	12.0	12.3	12.1
Kansas City, Missouri	17.5	22.1	12.2	12.2	11.4	11.4	12.4	12.2
Los Angeles, California	13.5	17.9	12.5	12.3	12.5	12.3	12.5	12.4
Miami, Florida	22.4	22.7	10.8	10.8	12.1	12.0	12.2	12.2

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TABLE IV (cont.

City	Percent of Non-whites in Total Population		Median Adult Educational Level for Central City		Median Level for all Central Cities of the State		Median Level for Suburban Areas of the State	
	1960	1970	M	F	M	F	M	F
Minneapolis, Minnesota	2.4%	4.4%	12.3	12.2	12.3	12.3	12.6	12.6
Mobile, Alabama	32.4	35.4	11.9	12.0	12.1	12.0	11.7	11.8
New York City, New York	14.0	21.1	11.7	11.4	11.7	11.4	12.4	12.3
Peoria, Illinois	9.3	11.5	12.2	12.1	11.6	11.4	12.4	12.3
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	26.6	33.6	10.9	10.9	11.1	11.1	12.2	12.2
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	16.7	20.2	11.4	11.6	11.1	11.1	12.2	12.2
San Francisco, California	10.0	13.4	12.5	12.4	12.5	12.3	12.5	12.4
Syracuse, New York	5.2	10.8	12.1	12.1	11.7	11.4	12.4	12.3
Tacoma, Washington	4.0	6.8	12.2	12.1	12.4	12.4	12.6	12.5
Washington, D.C.	53.9	71.1	12.2	12.2	-	-	-	-

*U.S. Census of Population. General Social and Economic Characteristics. Report PC(1-C1) - PC(1-C52). Tables 73, 83.

all fairness, however, several factors should be remembered about the nature of these use studies. Several studies were conducted only at the central library, a structure which the disadvantaged are very unlikely to use. Even when branch library use is included, use by the disadvantaged is difficult to measure by conventional methods since they are generally ill-at-ease with the questionnaire form. Most of these user studies are now three to six years old, and there is evidence that during this time urban libraries have been increasing their efforts to expand and improve services for the disadvantaged.

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Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of adult library cardholders (defined to be those 16 years of age or older).

Nelson Associates, Inc. User Survey of the New York Public Library Research Libraries. New York, Nelson Associates, Inc., 1969.

Based on questionnaires distributed to every person entering the research divisions on 21 days spaced over fall, summer and spring.

The Urban Central Library; Development Alternatives for San Francisco. San Francisco, Arthur D. Little, Inc. and John S. Bolles Associates, 1970.

Three questionnaire surveys were used to study users of all ages of both the main library and branches.

User Questionnaire in a Descriptive Analysis of Selected Public Libraries in New York State. Albany, New York State Education Department, 1967.

Questionnaires were distributed to all ages in central libraries - those which because of larger collections and better reference facilities are designated as main resource libraries within their system.

IV. Urban Library as Area Resource Center

There is an increasing tendency to ignore jurisdictional distinctions in urban areas. Students, in addition to using school and academic libraries, are major users of urban public libraries. Researchers, whether academic, industrial or professional, use the library most convenient for their purposes. This places the central city library in the role of reference and research center for the outlying area.

With its balanced book collection and backfiles of periodicals, newspapers, and other serials, only the urban central library has the variety of material required for research. While the metropolitan area may abound in partial collections in small public libraries, businesses and schools, only in the city library are found specialized materials, bibliographical information, and subject specialists. Therefore the small neighboring libraries or their patrons depend upon the metropolitan libraries to answer difficult reference questions from materials not available in their community. In some cases this relationship has been formalized in the shape of legal designation of the city library as regional resource center with state funds for that purpose. In many cases there remains an informal arrangement without adequate financial support from sources other than local government. This is expensive service in terms of cost of materials and specialized staff, and libraries find that the financial base which made possible the development of the collection is now largely outside the taxing area of the library.

Most suburban librarians recognize their dependence on the large city library and acknowledge the effect of the

proximity of its collection on their book selection policies. This comment, written in response to questions concerning the suburban attitude toward the large city library relates the attitude of many suburban librarians:

> While it is tempting to take the large city library for granted, its very existence makes the [suburban librarian's] job easier. It is not necessary to stock expensive and infrequently used materials. He can concentrate on the more popular and put more money in a circulating collection than would otherwise be possible.[23]

All the suburban librarians who answered the questions agreed that the metropolitan library should be reimbursed for the cost of such sharing. However, there have not been adequate cost studies to determine the amounts of these costs. State and federal funds were mentioned as sources to meet the costs.

While most urban libraries do not record the frequency of assistance given to other libraries, information on direct use of the urban library by nonresidents is often available. Figures given in user studies include: 38 percent of the use of the Detroit Public Library is by nonresidents, Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore) reports 20.3 percent of their total users are nonresidents and 12.7 percent of users of the central library in San Francisco live outside the city. Letters in response to a questionnaire from the Urban Library Trustees Council report the following figures. Chicago: 25 percent of Central Library users do not live in Chicago; Hartford, Connecticut: 50 percent of walk-in and telephone reference service is given to nonresidents (outside funding for this service amounts to only 2 percent of operating costs); Los Angeles: 20 percent of central library users reside in the county; Mobile, Alabama: 1 of 4 reference users at the main

library is not a resident or taxpayer of the service area; New Haven, Connecticut: 1/3 of the in-person and telephone reference use is by nonresidents with no reimbursement to the library; Rochester, New York: 42 percent of the borrowers using the main library lived outside of Rochester.

These figures emphasize the city central library's function of serving the reference needs of the whole area, often with inadequate funding. It is becoming increasingly clear that the legal boundaries of a city are meaningless dividing lines as far as public library service is concerned. It is imperative to the whole region that central library collections should be kept strong, current and well staffed. Money is the crucial stumbling block to achieving this end. Without funds in addition to local city funds supplied from a declining tax base, no urban library can adequately continue their vital function as an area resource library.

V. Statistics of Urban Libraries

A ONE-YEAR VIEW OF LIBRARIES

A comprehensive view of public library statistics in the areas of budget, staff, holdings, and transactions for libraries of various sizes has been compiled from Statistics of Public Libraries Serving Areas with at Least 25,000 Inhabitants. Table V is based on the most recent edition, 1968. Because of a change in scope, comparisons could not be made with past surveys in this series. The 1962 and 1965 editions included both public libraries and public library systems as single units in their counts. The 1968 edition makes a sharp distinction between public libraries and public library systems and includes only public libraries reported as independent and locally autonomous.

Compared in Table V are two groups of public libraries, those serving populations of 25,000 - 99,999 (to be referred to as small libraries) and those serving populations of 100,000 and over (to be referred to as large libraries). All items have been listed as totals and per capita amounts.

The small library group shows a slight advantage in holdings and transactions per capita. They hold 1.67 books per capita in comparison to the large libraries' 1.57, and each hold approximately .03 bibliographic volumes of serials per capita. However, in terms of average books per library, each small library would have a collection of 80,823 books and each large library would hold 524,763 books. This gives the large city patron access to a collection over six times the size of the collection available to the small city patron.

Both groups report .0004 total library staff positions

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TABLE V

PUBLIC LIBRARIES SERVING AT LEAST 25,000 INHABITANTS, 1968*

	Libraries Serving 25,000 - 99,999		Libraries Serving 100,000 and Over	
	Total	Per Capita	Total	Per Capita
Total number of libraries	891	-	244	-
Number of libraries reporting	826	-	231	-
Population served by all libraries	42,712,805	-	82,754,699	-
Population served by reporting libraries	39,884,317	-	77,350,494	-
Holdings at end of fiscal year:				
Books	66,760,057	1.67	121,220,324	1.57
Serials (bibliographic volumes)	1,127,484	.03	1,971,257	.03
Transactions of all print and audio-visual materials	208,634,744	5.23	351,579,278	4.55
Library staff positions (excluding maintenance staff)	14,907	.0004	32,744	.0004
Operating and capital expenditures	147,929,300	$3.71	340,095,304	$4.40
Operating expenditures, by purpose:				
Total	123,482,250	3.10	297,754,155	3.85
Salaries	76,314,818	1.91	194,684,713	2.52
Library materials (including print and audiovisual)	23,751,455	.60	48,739,382	.63

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TABLE V (contd.)

	Libraries Serving 25,000 - 99,999		Libraries Serving 100,000 and Over	
	Total	Per Capita	Total	Per Capita
Binding	1,043,926	.03	3,137,803	.04
All other operating expenditures (services to other libraries, maintenance, rent, travel, insurance, supplies)	22,372,051	.56	51,192,252	.66
Federal funds (for operating and capital expenditures)	9,233,413	.23	15,047,157	.19

*Compiled from Statistics of Public Libraries Serving Areas With at Least 25,000 Inhabitants, by Ruth Boaz. Washington, D.C., U.S. Office of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1970.

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per capita. However, considering only professional library staff, the large library group has proportionately more professionals. While the large library group serves 66% of the population in the survey, they employ 77% of the professional librarians. As indicated earlier, collection size and larger and more specialized staff contribute to heavy use of large libraries by patrons of smaller libraries in surrounding communities.

Library operating and capital expenditures for 1968 were $3.71 per capita for the small library group and $4.40 for the large library group. The major reason for the difference is evident in the break-down of operating expenditures by purpose. Expenditures for salaries show a large variance between the two groups, while the other items vary only slightly. The higher percentage of professional librarians employed by large libraries is reflected in a larger expenditure for salaries.

Federal funding provided 6.2% of the total operating and capital budget of the small library group and 4.3% of the total budget of the large libraries. Translated into per capita amounts, the small libraries received 23¢ per capita in federal funds and the large libraries 19¢. If these amounts had been equalized and the large libraries had received an additional 4¢ per capita, it could have meant in 1968 an additional $3,310,188 for libraries serving over 100,000 population. The difference in federal funding is even more pronounced when the libraries are further subdivided by size:

Population Served by Libraries	Federal Funding per Capita
25,000 - 49,999	25¢
50,000 - 99,999	22¢
100,000 - 499,999	23¢
500,000 and over	16¢

This indicates a severe lack of federal funding in the largest libraries.

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LIBRARIES IN THE 1961 - 1970 DECADE

While Table V has offered a still life of various aspects of library operations in one year, Tables VI - VIII illustrate trends for the 1961 - 1970 decade in library circulation and expenditure. The tables are based on data collected for the 1970 Indexes of American Public Library Circulation and Expenditure prepared by the Library Research Center of the University of Illinois. Letters of request were sent to all libraries serving over 25,000 population and the resulting raw statistics for circulation and expenditure were converted into indices with 1970 as the base year with the value of 100.

Table VI, Index of Circulation, shows library circulation in all three size groupings has grown at a slow rate from 1961 to 1970, with some declines followed by rises in the mid-years of the decade. It is perhaps more meaningful to subdivide the largest group into smaller units by size. Table VII shows circulation indices for the 100,000 and over population group subdivided into four groups. The group of libraries serving population of 100,000 - 249,999 has indices which rise and fall but generally rise from 1961 - 1970. The 250,000 - 499,999 group shows a fairly steady growth. However, the two larger library groups show decline; the 500,000 - 999,999 group has a bouncing up and down effect with overall decline, and the 1,000,000 and over group a steady decline. While these four groups average out to a slight growth in circulation for over 100,000 population libraries, this subdivision indicates the largest libraries (500,000 and over) have a declining rate of circulation.

The Index of Expenditure, Table VIII, indicates a steady rise in expenditures each year for each of the three size groupings from 1961 - 1970. Subdividing the largest group

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TABLE VI

INDEX OF PUBLIC LIBRARY CIRCULATION*
(Libraries Serving Over 25,000 Population)

Year	Libraries Serving 25,000 - 49,999	50,000 - 99,999	100,000 & Over
1961	88.4	88.2	89.3
1962	92	91	90.3
1963	95.3	94.3	93.2
1964	98.4	96.2	95
1965	98.4	98.1	95.8
1966	97.3	95.6	93.5
1967	95.4	94	96.1
1968	96.1	96	95.2
1969	97	96.7	99.3
1970	100	100	100

*Compiled from data for the 1970 Indexes of American Public Library Circulation and Expenditure, Library Research Center, University of Illinois, Urbana.

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TABLE VII

INDEX OF PUBLIC LIBRARY CIRCULATION*
(Libraries Serving Over 100,000 Population)

	Libraries Serving			
Year	100,000 - 249,999	250,000 - 499,999	500,000 - 999,999	1,000,000 & Over
1961	87.2	86	101	113
1962	105.5	86	102	111
1963	106.9	89	103	111
1964	94.6	91	103	112
1965	95.6	92	100	111
1966	92.5	92	99	104
1967	93.4	97	110	101
1968	92.4	95	113	100
1969	97.9	100	106	98
1970	100	100	100	100

*Compiled from data for the 1970 Indexes of American Public Library Circulation and Expenditure, Library Research Center, University of Illinois, Urbana.

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TABLE VIII

INDEX OF PUBLIC LIBRARY EXPENDITURE*
(Libraries Serving Over 25,000 Population)

Year	Libraries Serving 25,000 - 49,999	50,000 - 99,999	100,000 & Over
1961	44.4	43.9	44
1962	47.7	47.3	46
1963	52.1	51.3	50.3
1964	55.6	55.8	55
1965	60.6	60.9	60.5
1966	66.9	66.3	68
1967	74.3	74	75.1
1968	81.3	81.7	81.5
1969	90.4	90.3	91.1
1970	100	100	100

*Compiled from data for the 1970 Indexes of American Public Library Circulation and Expenditure, Library Research Center, University of Illinois, Urbana.

revealed no new trends, as it did with circulation. While the rise in the expenditure indices may seem steep, it is interesting to compare the growth in the price of the two major items in the budget for library operating expenditures in Table V, salaries and library materials. As an indication of rising salary expenditure, Table IX shows for the 1961 - 1970 decade a 61% increase in salaries paid to new graduates of library schools. As shown in Table X, the average price of hardcover books increased from 1961 to 1970 by 101% and in 1971 grew another 27%. This means the price of books more than doubled in the 1961 - 1970 decade, a rate which is more than three times the increase of the Consumer Price Index (which grew 30.2% in the 1961 - 1970 decade).[24] In addition to books, libraries have been expanding in the collection of a variety of media - films, recordings, cassettes. With prices continually on the rise, it is becoming increasingly difficult to contend with all the areas of need, in adding and upgrading staff positions, in expanding into new media, in continuing the collection of books and periodicals.

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TABLE IX

AVERAGE SALARY PAID TO NEW LIBRARY SCHOOL GRADUATES*

Year	Average Salary	Percentage Increase From 1961
1961	$5,365	-
1962	5,661	5.5
1963	5,902	10.0
1964	6,145	14.5
1965	6,468	20.6
1966	6,765	26.1
1967	7,305	36.2
1968	7,660	42.8
1969	8,161	52.1
1970	8,611	60.5
1971	8,846	64.9

*Based on Library Journal's annual survey of average salaries paid to new graduates of accredited library schools.

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TABLE X

PRICES OF SELECTED HARD COVER BOOKS*

Year	Average Price	Percentage Increase From 1961
1961	$5.81	-
1962	5.90	2
1963	6.55	13
1964	6.93	19
1965	7.65	32
1966	7.94	37
1967	8.43	45
1968	8.47	46
1969	9.50	64
1970	11.66	101
1971	13.25	128

*Based on Publisher's Weekly's annual tabulation of books recorded in their "Weekly Record" section. Not included are paperbound books, government documents, encyclopedias.

CITY FINANCE AND LIBRARIES, 1961 - 1970

How have libraries fared in their competition with other city services for a share of limited city income? Table XI attempts to answer that question for cities of all sizes and Table XII for the 43 largest cities (changed to the 48 largest cities after the 1970 Census). Compared are total city expenditures and expenditures for libraries for 1961 to fiscal year 1970/71. Both tables show that expenditures for libraries have not kept pace with the growth of the city budget. General expenditures for cities of all sizes increased 150.9% from 1961 - 1970/71, but expenditures for libraries only 111.9%. This 39% difference could have meant an additional $82 million for city libraries in 1970/71 if their income rate of growth had equalled that of general city expenditures.

The difference in growth rate is even more striking for the 43 largest cities. While general expenditures increased 147% from 1961 to 1970/71, expenditures for libraries increased only 99.6%. If expenditures for libraries had grown that additional 47.4% and kept pace with general expenditure, each of the 48 largest libraries would have had an average of slightly over $1 million additional funds for 1970/71.

However, this has not been the case and expenditures for libraries for 1970/71 amounted to 1.39% of the city budget for cities of all sizes and 1.2% of the total budget for the 43 largest cities. In the words of one urban library director, "Because a library's budget is a tiny fraction of expenditure for public service, budgetary cushions are seldom possible in the way that they are for larger departments. A difference of as little as ten percent in a library budget can measure the distance between luxury and disaster."[25]

TABLE XI

CITY GOVERNMENT FINANCES*
(Based on Cities of all Sizes**)

Year	City General Expenditure		Expenditure for Libraries	
	Total (in millions)	Percentage Increase From 1961	Total (in millions)	Percentage Increase From 1961
1961	12,736	-	210	-
1962	13,475	5.8	211	.5
1963	14,118	10.9	247	17.6
1963/64***	14,938	17.3	242	-
1964/65	16,012	25.7	267	27.1
1965/66	17,404	36.7	282	34.2
1966/67	19,283	51.4	305	45.2
1967/68	21,563	69.3	341	62.4
1968/69	24,500	92.4	370	76.2
1969/70	27,682	117.4	407	93.8
1970/71	31,947	150.9	445	111.9

*Based on Compendium of City Government Finances (1961-1963/64) and City Government Finances (1964/65-1970/71), U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

**Information was requested from all municipalities that had at least 50,000 inhabitants and from a stratified random sample of smaller municipal governments.

***Changed to fiscal year reporting.

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TABLE XII

LARGE CITY GOVERNMENT FINANCES*
(Based on 43 Largest Cities: 1961-1968/69
and 48 Largest Cities: 1969/70-1970/71)

	City General Expenditure			Expenditure for Libraries		
Year	Total (in thousands)	Average Per City	Percentage Increase From 1961	Total (in thousands)	Average Per City	Percentage Increase From 1961
1961	6,388,121	148,560.9		96,524	2,244.7	
1962	6,791,688	157,946.2	6.3	101,747	2,366.2	5.4
1963	7,196,375	167,357.6	12.7	106,024	2,465.7	9.8
1963/64**	7,523,160	174,957.2	17.8	114,041	2.652.1	18.1
1964/65	8,055,469	187,336.5	26.1	123,956	2,882.7	28.4
1965/66	unavailable					
1966/67	9,762,403	227,032.6	52.8	133,691	3,109.1	38.5
1967/68	11,242,557	261,454.8	76.0	149,059	3,466.5	54.4
1968/69	unavailable					
1969/70	14,868,284	309,755.9	108.5	195,228	4,067.3	81.2
1970/71	17,592,105	366,502.2	147.0	215,061	4,480.4	99.6

*Based on Compendium of City Government Finances (1961-1963/64) and City Government Finances (1964/65 1970/71), U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

**Changed to fiscal year reporting.

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INDIVIDUAL LIBRARIES VIEW 1972

Letters in response to a questionnaire by the Urban Library Trustees Council show the financial state of urban libraries in 1972. Of 51 usable responses, 35 of those urban libraries reported recent cuts in services because of financial problems. These cuts primarily came in the areas of staff positions, hours of service, programs, and collection building. Specifically mentioned by individual libraries were cuts in materials budgets (10% cut in periodicals, book budget down one third, 40% cut in books). Shortening of hours of service was also mentioned, with ten libraries reporting cuts in main library hours and ten with reduced branch hours. Reducing bookmobile service or discontinuing it altogether was also reported. There had been no salary increases in some libraries, staff positions had been dropped in others and still other libraries stated that a freeze on hiring had caused a reduction in staff. Reduction in staff usually meant reduction in programs. Even when no cuts were reported, libraries often responded that they were financially at a standstill, unable to start new and necessary programs. Some of the comments concerning the possibility of outreach programs with budget limitations:

> "No new significant programs can be undertaken and funded out of our present operating budget." (Akron, Ohio Public Library.)

> "City funds have not been sufficient to embark on innovative programs. We believe that what we start should be permanently a part of our library service and not short-lived temporary programs of demonstrations that are here today and disappointingly gone tomorrow." (San Diego Public Library.)

"As to programs, the curtailment in staff and hours will mean less access by the public to our collections and meeting rooms. It will also mean a cutting back in such programs as stories for children, book talks, visits to schools, tours of the Library, and possibly others." (Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.)

"The difficulty of meeting just the basic costs of operation have prevented this system from offering service to the disadvantaged, institutionalized, and to the aged." (Mobile, Alabama Public Library.)

"Because of our own convictions, and because of today's governmental priorities, we make every effort to reach out and communicate with the disadvantaged about the values of public libraries. But we simply do not have the moneys with which to underwrite really salubrious and continuing programs." (Los Angeles Public Library.)

Libraries also expressed concern that their reference and resource collections developed over the years were deteriorating because of cuts in book and serials budgets.

"The Library's collection of research materials has been seriously harmed by increasing costs and relatively stationary book appropriations." (Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, New York.)

"It [federal funding] would be used to support the research collection which has withered in recent years due to a steadily decreasing book budget." (Cleveland Public Library.)

THE FUTURE OF URBAN LIBRARIES

When it comes to the programs deemed necessary for urban living, an increasing number can neither be developed nor maintained on a strictly local basis. The federal government is already responsible for a great deal having to do with the future shape of urban America with such federally supported urban projects as transportation, pollution control, hospital and health facilities, housing and urban renewal projects. The city can no longer provide adequate financial support for the urban library from its declining tax base. Additional funds are imperative to support the urban library's efforts to serve the residents of disadvantaged, inner city neighborhoods and to continue the urban library's service as reference and research center for the metropolitan region.

FOOTNOTES

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[1]Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1971. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1971), Table 20, p. 21-23.

[2]Henry Voos, Information Needs in Urban Areas: A Summary of Research in Methodology. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1969), p. 32.

[3]Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1971. Table 19, p. 20.

[4]Armando Rodriquez, "Necessity for Bilingual Education," Wilson Library Bulletin, 44,(March 1970), p. 724.

[5]Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1972. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1972), Table 15, p. 16.

[6]Harold Hacker, "Financial Problems of the Large Public Library," Library Quarterly, 38,(January 1968), p. 42.

[7]Jerome D. Fellmann, "Metropolitan Population: Prospect and Change, 1960 - 1980," Changing Environment for Library Services, p. 4.

[8]Fellmann, p. 12.

[9]Jack Rosenthal, "Suburbs Abandoning Dependence on City," New York Times, (August 16, 1971), p. 1, col. 3.

[10]Ralph Conant, "How the Urban Community Copes with the Central City and Affects its Residents," Library Service to the Unserved, ed. L. L. Sherrill. (New York: Bowker, 1970), p. 27-28.

[11]William Hellmuth, "Trends in Urban Fiscal Policies," Public Library and the City, ed., Ralph Conant, (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1965), p. 155.

[12]Voos, p. 65-66.

[13]M. L. Bundy, "Urban Information and Public Libraries," Library Journal, 97,(January 15, 1972), p. 166.